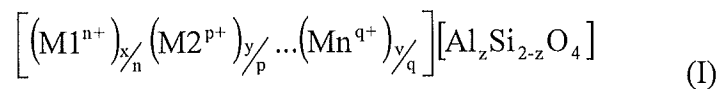


In the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently amended) ~~A pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~ A composition comprising a zeolite material comprising releasably adsorbed nitric oxide for use in surgery and/or therapy and a pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic carrier therefor.

2. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~ The composition according to claim 1, wherein the zeolite has the following general formula (I):



wherein M1 and M2 ... Mn are extra framework metal cations of elements selected from the group consisting of Li, Na, K, Ca, Mg, Fe, Cu, Ru, Rh, Co, Ni, Zn and Ag, or are chosen from small organic cations such as $N(R_1)_a(R_2)_b^+$ wherein R₁ and R₂ are independently selected from H, -CH₃, -CH₂CH₃, or -CH₂CH₂CH₃, and a and b are independently 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 such that a + b = 4;

x ranges from zero to nz,

y ranges from zero to pz, and

v ranges from zero to qz;

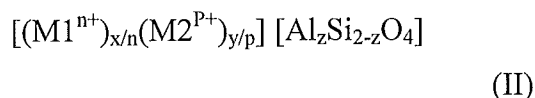
subject to the condition that $x/n + y/p + \dots + v/q = z$; wherein

z is the number of silicon atoms replaced by aluminium atoms in the zeolite framework;

n⁺, p⁺ and q⁺ are the charges of the extra framework metal cations, and may individually take the values of +1, +2 or +3.

3. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 2, wherein M1 and/or M2 are NH_4^+ .

4. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 1, wherein the zeolite has the following general formula (II):



wherein M1 and M2 are extra framework metal cations of elements selected from the group consisting of Li, Na, K, Ca, Mg, Fe, Cu, Ru, Rh, Co, Ni, Zn and Ag, or are chosen from small organic cations such as $\text{N}(\text{R}_1)_a(\text{R}_2)_b^+$ wherein R_1 and R_2 are independently selected from H, - CH_3 , - CH_2CH_3 , or - $\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$, and a and b are independently 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 such that $a + b = 4$;

x may range from zero to nz, and

y may range from zero to pz, subject to the condition that $x/n + y/p = z$;

wherein

z is the number of silicon atoms replaced by aluminium atoms in the zeolite framework;

n^+ and p^+ are the charges of the extra framework metal cations and may individually take the values of +1, +2 or +3.

5. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 1, wherein the zeolite is selected from the group consisting of Ni-LTA(A), Cu-LTA(A), Co-LTA(A), Mn-LTA(A), Fe-LTA, Na-LTA(A) and Cu-PHI.

6. (Currently amended) The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation according to claim 1, in the form of a powder or a monolith.

7. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 6, wherein said monolith is formed by compression of a zeolite powder or by mixing a powdered zeolite with a binder.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 7, wherein the binder is selected from ceramic binders, polymeric binders and other polymers.

9-41. (Canceled.)

42. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 8, wherein said ceramic binder is selected from the group consisting of silica and alumina, and wherein said polymeric binder is selected from the group consisting of polysulfone, polyethylene, PET, polystyrene and polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE).

43. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 1, wherein said zeolite is partially or completely dehydrated prior to nitric oxide loading

44. (Currently amended) ~~The pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~
The composition according to claim 1, ~~further comprising a pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic carrier therefor~~ wherein said composition is sealed inside an airtight package.

[[44]]45. (Currently amended) A medical article comprising the ~~pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~ composition according to claim 1.

[[45]]46. (Currently amended) A cosmetic or personal hygiene product comprising the ~~pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic preparation~~ composition according to claim 1.

[[46]]47. (Currently amended) The medical article of claim[[44]] 45, wherein said medical article is selected from the group consisting of stents, catheters, wound dressings, bandages, self-adhesive plasters and patches

[[47]]48. (Currently amended) The medical article of claim[[44]] 45, wherein said medical article is a stent.

[[48]]49. (Currently amended) The cosmetic or personal hygiene product of claim[[45]] 46, wherein said cosmetic or personal hygiene product is selected from the group consisting of cosmetics, deodorants, anti-aging skin preparations, preparations applied before, during or after hair removal, hair preparations and depilatory preparations.

50. (New) The composition according to claim 1, wherein said carrier is a pharmaceutical carrier.

51. (New) The composition according to claim 1, wherein said carrier is a nutraceutical carrier.

52. (New) The composition according to claim 1, wherein said carrier is a cosmetic carrier.